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SOCIAL ACTION

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This Side and That

Commonwealth Solidarity

The Citizenship Bill is on the anvil. Most queries and objections in Parliament turned round the Commonwealth citizenship, a phrase so decidedly vague as to delight romantic world-citizens and provoke lawyers to oratorical bouts. One would expect this attractive idea to imply solidarity and equality among Commonwealth people. Not so in the view of our present government which has already proclaimed its policy of discrimination, not on grounds of race, class or politics but on grounds of religion only. Christian missionaries will not be admitted to India without an "endorsement" on their passport or without a "visa," as mentioned in "The Eighth Year," a book published on Independence Day by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Some officials allege that a missionary should be taken as an 'immigrant', even if he intends to stay here for only one, two or five years. The fact that he is a missionary makes him different.

A Little Sister of the Poor, a worker of the Mission to Lepers, etc. need a visa for reasons of security and so does any apostle of Christ's Gospel of peace ; but a Communist agent bent on preaching militant atheism and revolution needs no visa. What are the notions our Home Ministry has of public security ? Where is the secularity of our secular Government ? How are the other countries of the Commonwealth reacting to this patent discrimination on religious grounds only ?

Unequal Citizens

In the Citizenship Bill, strong objection was taken to the provision that empowers the executive to take citizenship away from a naturalized citizen without any recourse to the judiciary being possible. This protection against an appeal to the courts was made a privilege of the legislature dealing with land acquisition ; a like privilege is now granted to the executive. Is not this the road leading to dictatorship ?

What is even worse is that this privilege can be exercised against the people who, on grounds of domicile and a previous five-year residence, were declared full members of the Union by the very Constitution : they too apparently would have no recourse to the judiciary against the fiat of the executive. Those who according to the law of karma could not escape Indian citizenship are protected against the arbitrary moods of the executive ; those who with mature deliberation sought and chose the same citizenship are shuffled under the sword of Damocles.

According to the Constitution, all citizens are equal ; according to the Citizenship Bill, some would

be less equal than others. Such is the present drift in our democratic trend.

Missionaries

In "The Eighth Year", the Ministry of Information tells us that the Home Ministry deals with public services and public security. It presents a novel version of the regulations of admission of missionaries, presumably as a measure of public security. "In regard to the new policy adopted in regard to the foreign missionaries, it has been decided that such of them as are additional members of a mission or replace existing missionaries will be allowed into the country, provided Indians are not available for such posts. These missionaries must also have outstanding qualifications or specialized experience."

What an additional job for the Home Ministries! So far they were already overburdened with the task of investigating crimes, pursuing absconders, unearthing plots and making regular reports on law and order. They will now have to ascend to the spiritual plane to engage in parallel avocations. After having specialised in pastoral and kerymatic theology, they will examine, possibly psychoanalyse, at any rate prove with new methods (most of them know only one method with three degrees) each Indian priest to check if one or other is or is not available for a vacant post as professor, conscience director in this and that place, for this novitiate or that convent; if at long last they consider there is no Indian available, then and then only, can they advise their Home Ministry to allow the entry of a foreign missionary.

One would have fancied that a personal statement of the local bishop would have sufficed. Nothing of the sort ; the Home Ministries are expected to satisfy themselves about the spiritual needs and resources of the Christian community. Which is one more symptom that the competence of our secular state has trespassed the limits of secularity, pace the Patres Conscripti of the Constituent Assembly.

Sorrow

A Bombay newspaper, commenting on these new rules in their new garb, serenely declared that "the reactions of the foreign press were on the whole appreciative of India's new policy towards foreign missionaries". This would show that the circles in the West which are interested in mission-work have nothing to do with the political and capitalist press or that they tactfully refrain from expressing their feelings. But from private sources, it is easily ascertained that many judicious Christians are badly hurt, that parents are grieved at the aspersion indirectly cast on the work of their children, that many youths who had hoped to dedicate their lives among us feel deeply frustrated. Intimate suffering is not publicised. They will not blame India for the wayward pleasures of our Home Ministry. The Indian people will revere their sorrow.

Protecting Citizens

India is threatened not from outside but from inside. Largely through ministerial hesitation and unwillingness to risk unpopularity, law-abiding citizens are left unprotected whenever the agitators who are always among us profit by any incident, were it only

a dispute about a bus-ticket, to rouse popular emotion into a frenzy. The worst hit are the poor and down-trodden. It is high time that our politicians, especially those belonging to the opposition, wake up to realities. The country demands law and order in streets and public squares ; the people love a master.

A. L.

We are glad to inform Our Readers that Rev. Fr. Jerome D'Souza S.J., The Director of The Social Institute, has been appointed a Representative on the Indian Delegation to the U. N. He will be away from India for the duration of the present session of the U. N., which will hold its meetings till the middle of December.

Wages in India

The general impression is that wages in India are considerably below a family wage¹. India is a poor country, though potentially rich, and this poverty is borne out by the wage rate of the vast majority of her people.

If we compare the per capita national income of India with other countries we come to the same conclusion. Taking Colin Clark's oriental unit, i.e., the amount of goods and services Re. 1 would have purchased in 1948-'49, the U. S. and Canadian per capita national income is 7000 units, while that of India is but 150-200 units, such an enormous difference that cannot be explained away by the difference in cost of living. In rupees the per capita income for 1952-'53 (1948-'49 prices) is only Rs. 261 as against Rs. 246.9 for 1948-'49.

The half of the workers who do better than the rest, skilled workers and clerks, get between Rs. 80—100. (Big firms pay better than Government.) And this salary should be taken in conjunction with the appalling housing conditions found almost everywhere.

The other half, usually the most ignored, are the agricultural workers. Since these numerically constitute very much over half of the workers in this country, we will take them first.

Agricultural Wages

Dr. Kini² states that out of the total population of 367 millions in 1951, 214 millions neither earn nor are

¹ Cf. *Social Action*, May-June, July, 1955, *Wages, Family Wages* by the writer.

² *Rural India*, April, 1955.

in receipt of an unearned income. Out of this 214 millions about 100 millions are children; this leaves 114 millions (he apparently makes no deduction for the old and disabled) who *should* earn and do not. Most of these unemployed belong to the agricultural classes; furthermore, a large percentage are out of work for at least 5 months a year. Dr. Kini estimates that 200 millions must be rehabilitated from a state of unemployment or partial employment. By 1961 there will be a population increase of about 50 millions, so that by 1961 there will be 35 million more adults seeking work. Thus by 1961 there will be 235 million people unemployed or only partially employed. As a small consolation, the Second Five Year Plan hopes to give employment to 12 million more workers.

The rural population (1951 Census) was 2,943 lakhs. Of these, 2,404 lakhs (81.5%) belong to the agricultural classes. The urban population was 613 lakhs, of which 531 lakhs (86.0%) belong to non-agricultural classes.

Among the rural agricultural classes, 687 lakhs or 28.6% were self-supporting; 1,414 lakhs (58.8%) were non-earning dependents, while 303 lakhs (12.6%) were earning dependents.

Government Report on Agricultural Wages³

The *All-India Agricultural Labour Enquiry* "was conducted in 812 villages selected on the principle of

³ *Agricultural Wages in India*, Vol I & II, 1952 and *Rural Manpower & Occupational Structure*, 1954, being "The Agricultural Labour Enquiry." The statistics for wages refer, for the most part, to 1949-'50.

stratified random sampling in 27 States of the Indian Union.....The families surveyed numbered in all 1,03,548. A family was taken as a 'household' with an independent common kitchen and living under the same roof, including temporary absentees but excluding guests.....Information pertaining to employment and unemployment, gross and net income, *begar* or involuntary labour, cost and standard of living of agricultural labour families and indebtedness were collected.....Any person who worked as an agricultural worker for more than one-half of the total number of days on which he actually performed work during the year was treated as an agricultural worker."

It will be noticed that the Labour Enquiry differs from the 1951 Census in that the latter is an enumeration of the whole nation taking the individual as the unit, while the Enquiry is based on sample villages with the family as the unit.

The Average Family

There is a real difficulty in defining the Indian family from the economic point of view. We have already seen in a previous article that taking the family in the strict sense, i.e., parents and children, this averages 6 persons. But for the purpose of reckoning a family budget, as all know, the Indian family is not restricted to parents and children only ; there may be other relatives present, either as earners or as dependents, and there may be children or one of the parents, absent from the family. For instance, from a Family Budget study of Delhi we learn that it is quite common for the father to have his brother in

his household, and, also, though less common, his mother too.

However, when taking an average, there is a certain compensation in the displacement of relatives, though allowances should be made where some member of a rural family works in an industry away from his village. The average rural family, according to the Agricultural Labour Enquiry (ALE), is 5.6 (4.91 according to 1951 Census).

The ALE divides a family into earners, helpers and dependents. An earner was "one who earned income however meagre it might be." Helpers "those who assist earners without earning independently any income themselves." Dependents are those "who (are) neither earners nor helpers."

The dependents form 50.7 per cent of the family. It should be remarked that according to the ALE, if an individual "earns or helps for even a single day, the individual is included in the labour force. This really means that there are more dependents than the statistics actually show, since many individuals marked as earners or helpers, are idle for a large portion of the year. Bearing this in mind "Of the total family size of 5.01, there were 2.48 dependents, 1.57 earners, 0.96 helpers. Roughly, almost all the men and a little over half the women and children above the age of 10 were working". This striking fact of so many members of the family who are working should be remembered when we come to compare the very poor income which is the result of so many workers.

Attached & Casual Labour

Since it is important to know which workers have a permanent job (attached workers), and which not (casual workers), a comparison of the percentage of the one to the other reveals the poverty of the casual worker in particular, since he is less well paid and less secure in his job.

Now attached workers, *i.e.*, those with permanent jobs, form only 11 per cent of the total number of agricultural workers. (Travancore-Cochin has the lowest percentage of attached workers : 0.1 per cent.) "The percentage of casual workers' families to total number of agricultural labour families," says ALE, "varied from 77 to 81 in the Eastern, Northern and Central zones but it was more than 90 in Western and Southern zones."

Nor is the casual workers' lot much improved by owning a plot because out of the total of all rural families, *i.e.*, including those who live in the country but are engaged in some other occupation, only 13.4 per cent held some land.

(*N. B.* Since the average size of holdings in the country is only approximately 5 acres, only the big land owners can afford to hire attached workers. This brings in another angle of the land reforms now going on; desirable as they are, land reform should not mean that the casual worker is to be without work. It is he who should get the first chance of becoming a landholder himself.)

Slavery ?

Attached workers would seem to be better off than their fellow casual workers. But this is not always

so. Sometimes they are very much worse off indeed ! Listen to ALE : "Attached workers are engaged either for a year or at least for a month, but frequent cases of life-long and even hereditary employment were noticed during the enquiry. Driven into debts by their poverty, the agricultural workers have to render life-long service to their creditors whom they cannot repay otherwise." The Enquiry then goes on to quote Wadia and Merchant in "Our Economic Problem" :

"The average agricultural worker is not infrequently compelled in times of stress to mortgage his personal liberty. In return for a small sum of money which he may happen to need at the moment, he agrees to serve the man from whom he borrowed. The money is not repaid, nor is it intended to be repaid ; but the borrower remains a life-long bond slave of his creditor."

ALE gives an example of the agreement of a landless worker with his employer-creditor. Unfortunately it is too long to give in full. Here are some extracts from the service bond (*Naukar-Nama*), which are very common in the country.

"We hereby agree that I shall daily perform all the agricultural work in connection with your cultivation... (Then follows a promise to pay for any loss caused through negligence and compensation to be paid through absence from work.) I hereby agree to perform your service on these terms, and have in lieu of the agreement received an advance of Rs. 300 being the amount of principal, at *Sawai* (25 per cent per annum),

"I agree to serve on Rs. 18 per month in lieu of the advance mentioned above and agree that this remuneration of Rs. 18 may be adjusted towards the repayment of the debt mentioned above...."

As if all this was not bad enough, the worker is required to offer some one as a surety who also binds himself to the creditor-employer in a manner very like slavery. The offerer of surety promises :

"If the person executing this *Naukar-Nama* is not able to repay the debt, I hereby agree to attend to your service until the debt is repaid in full. I shall not raise any objection to this. I am hereby executing this *Naukar-Nama* voluntarily in my proper senses, and agree that it shall be binding on me, my estate and my heirs."

And thus it is that families are sometimes enslaved for generations.

This 'begar' or involuntary labour, says ALE, "is a characteristic feature of agricultural economy. It generally prevails among attached workers whose contracts of employment are determined by the force of tradition and custom." Either it took the form of a contractual agreement just described, or "it took the form of low wages to attached workers drawn from depressed classes or aboriginal tribes who were not free to work with other employers. Consequently, this resulted in a chronic state of underemployment and social disabilities."

Both the Constitution and the Penal Code prohibit *begar*. It is to be hoped that vigorous steps will be taken to exterminate such a hateful practice.

Wages

Attached Workers : as is well known agricultural workers usually receive part-payment in kind. This has to be counted into wages. This has been done by the ALE : "The emoluments of attached workers, in terms of cash, after evaluation of perquisites such as meals, clothes and lodging, ranged from Rs. 38 to Rs. 50 per month." Here are a few samples of the average cash value of attached workers' monthly salary : Hyderabad, Rs. 25 to Rs. 44 ; Mysore, Rs. 25 to Rs. 30, Travancore-Cochin, Rs. 33 to Rs. 42, Vindhya Pradesh, Rs. 15 to Rs. 20.

Casual Workers : their wages vary from State to State and the ALE has not worked out any all-Indian average. This would be difficult because casual workers are not employed all the year round, usually finding employment round the sowing and harvesting period.

As an example, we however can take some rates of casual male workers. Including allowances for perquisites of food, clothing, etc., the cash value of average daily wage ranges from Rs. 0—10—0 in Vindhya Pradesh, 0—15—7 in Madras, 1—1—6 in Bombay to 2—0—1 in Punjab and 2—8—2 in Pepsu. Or to take examples for different jobs in Bombay State : Men Rs. 1—3—1, women, 1—0—7, for embanking ; men, 1—1—5, women, 0—10—8, children, 0—10—8 for sowing ; men, 0—14—3, women, 0—10—2, children, 0—7—9 for weeding. Bombay may be taken as something of an average State in the payment of casual labour ; some States, e.g., Punjab and Assam have higher rates, while others as Mysore and Madhya Bharat have lower. All the wages are pitifully low, especially if we remember

that casual workers are unemployed for a good part of the year and have to save up when they find work for the hard times to come.

Hours of Work

The length of the working day, says the ALE, has "no specific limit". "During the busy season... the attached workers have work from dawn till late at night. In slack seasons... the hours of work are generally 8 per day. No holidays or leave for medical or other urgent reasons can be claimed as a right by attached workers, though on important festivals they were generally allowed a holiday. The important point, however, is that these concessions were allowed only in a feudal and charitable spirit and were not a part and parcel of the contract between the workers and their employers... In some States, the employers insisted that if a worker absented himself during the period of contract, he had to make good the period of absence by working for the requisite number of days after the contract was over."

As for the casual workers, their hours of work depended "on the goodwill and co-operation between the workers and their employers and on local custom." The working day might be anything from 6 hours to 11 hours a day.

Prices

Wages by themselves are not very significant without relation to prices, especially of the essentials of life, of food above all. Although the ALE does its best to create a good impression in this respect, the conclusion for Bombay State is broadly true of the whole

country ; it is that "whereas the prices of cereals and pulses have risen by 3.50 to 4.00 times since 1938-'39, the comparative increase in agricultural wages has, on the whole, been less."

But if anything this is an understatement, since few places will be found where wages have risen 3 or 4 times. Moreover, in many states the rise is over 3 or 4 times for the cost of cereals (the chief food item). Taking 1938-'39 as 100, in 1948-'49, in Travancore-Cochin, for instance, paddy had risen 7.56 times, rice, 8.5 times ; in Ajmir, rice had risen 9.8 times, wheat 7.1 times. Moreover, since payment in kind formed 36.7 per cent of the total wage quotations in the Enquiry, the result is that "the ostensible increase in cash wages is to some extent not a real one but is incidental to the incursion of the price factor." That is to say, that 33 per cent of the wage was inflated beyond its real value by being paid in kind, the prices of which had steadily risen.

Cattle and Goats

To be complete, we add for all rural families, *i.e.*, landowners, tenants, agricultural labourers, non-agriculturists, the number of livestock (which are a help to the family budget) per family.

All-India :

Head of cattle per family: 2.2 (agr. labourers, 1.0)

Sheep & goats " " 1.3 (" " 0.8)

Poultry " " 0.9 (" " 0.8)

Housing Conditions

Besides wages, another indication of social conditions is the kind of house a person lives in. What kind

of houses are occupied by the rural population? "Broadly, houses were classified into *pucca* houses and *kacha* houses. *Pucca* houses are those the walls and roofs of which are built of bricks and stones with lime and mortar. If the walls were made of bricks and stones but the roof was made of thatch, the house was called partly *pucca* and partly *kacha*. Others were classified as *kacha* houses! ALE.

How many lived in *pucca* houses? "Since the construction of *pucca* houses with bricks and mortar require substantial initial investment, only those who were relatively better off owned such houses. Thus, a few big landlords, merchants and moneylenders had *pucca* houses and the rest, working classes, the artisans and marginal cultivators lived in *kacha* houses with mud walls and thatched roofs." ALE 84.1 per cent of all rural families lived in *kacha* houses, while 92.6 per cent of the agricultural workers did so.

"The percentage of partly *pucca* and partly *kacha* houses was only 2.1, taking the Indian Union as a whole. Thus the percentage of *pucca* houses came to 13.8." ALE.

A redeeming feature in this story of bad housing, is that nearly all the houses were self-owned. The percentage of rented houses was about 1.7. This, however, did not mean that the plot on which the house was erected was owned by the houseowner.

Generally, there was only one family per house, i.e., 95.3 per cent of the families had a separate house. But houses of one room formed the greatest percentage, viz., 38.0. The average number of rooms per house was

2.3. The average number of rooms per house for agricultural labourers was 1.9.

We may close here this section on agricultural wages. We shall gather together the conclusions in a later article. For the time being, the attentive reader must have noticed that the wages paid are far from what a family wage should be. Even if the statistics are for the most part of 1949-'50, so too are the prices, and while there has been more slight increase in wages — it is but little — so too has there been an increase in prices so that there is little, if any, change in *real* wages.

If the attached agricultural worker is badly off, his fellow casual worker is in a still worse position, since he has no security of employment and is dependent on the vagaries of the weather and the whims of his employers. As we shall have occasion to repeat later, the wages in general in the country must be raised, and since this cannot be done all at once, those wage earners in the lowest bracket, those who do not get even the minimum necessary to procure a sufficiency of essentials, must be the first to have their wages raised. And among this class surely come agricultural workers.

(The next article will deal with industrial workers and the result of a Family Budget Enquiry.)

A. Nevett

Social Work in an Under-developed Country

Social Work in the strict sense of being 'the art of bringing various resources to bear on individual, group, and community needs by the application of a scientific method of helping people to help themselves'* is of recent origin, and has been developed in this form to a large extent mainly in the West. It is said to be the result of a deep and profound reflection on the social maladjustments of our times, a study of their causes and the formulation of methods for their solution. It therefore implies a scientific, rational, yet deeply humane attitude in face of the social problems it seeks to solve.† It concerns itself with the study of man, his nature, his rights, his needs and aspirations, his social attitudes and well-being; it analyses the social structures of society and their changing patterns, their consequences for good and evil; how misery thrives on social injustice. In the course of its evolution, Social Work has discovered practical skills and techniques that have been successfully tried out in many parts of both hemispheres. Of late there has been an attempt to create and systematise more adequate methods of action to cope successfully with widely differing conditions obtaining throughout the world.

A Social Philosophy

Today Social Work appears as organised activity, based on scientific knowledge, using skilled and tried

* Social Work by H. H. Stroup, pg. 1.

† Service Social dans le Monde, July 1955, pg. 97.

methods of work, and springing from a specific philosophic outlook. It considers the human individual as an end in himself; it respects his potentialities and his innate rights and a dignity that surpasses all animate and inanimate creation. It therefore always and as far as possible seeks to interest him in his own development, to arouse his enthusiasm to improve himself, to adapt him to his social environment in such a manner as to make the best use of it. No compulsion or force is used, but always gentle persuasion or rather the person is made to feel at every step that he is responsible for his own betterment, and must make efforts on his own part to achieve his goal. On the other hand the social environment itself is sought to be moulded so as to make it possible for the individual to satisfy his needs and aspirations within its embrace to the largest extent possible. Social justice in human relations becomes the yardstick of social improvement, and social charity the bond that links all men and nations together irrespective of colour, race or nationality. But since social work calls for intimate relationships between the client, whether treated as a single individual or within a group, and the social worker, there is no one set formula of dealing with different people and groups because their needs can never be precisely the same. And so the prescription has to vary in each case.

Application

If this is so in the advanced countries of the world, where Social Work techniques have been applied and developed for quite some time, it is obvious that the difficulty of evolving both a conceptual basis and a

technical framework for social work in the under-developed countries should be much greater. As a matter of fact, much spade work in this direction was done during the discussions of the Sixth International Conference of Social Work held at Madras in 1952. Perhaps not enough attention has been paid to the findings of the men and the women who spoke at the Conference, but their contributions do take as a long way to an understanding of the nature and scope of Social Work in the under-developed countries.

The Problem

The problem really boils down to the question: Can the theory and the practical skills of Social Work as applied in the West be safely utilised and followed in a country like India? Are there not vital differences between the Western and Indian background? Do not these differences call for perhaps a completely new approach and the formation of new attitudes in the social worker before he sets himself to tackle the problem? Correspondingly does the situation not require a reorganisation of the training programme in Schools of Social Work that have been and will be set up in the under-developed countries? It is maintained that both the professional, semi-professional and voluntary social workers will need to be assisted to the acquirement of a specific social outlook and social theory peculiar to their own background. Is this so?

Fundamentals

But first what are we supposed to understand by the term 'under-developed' country? It is generally

admitted that a country which is economically and technologically backward falls within this category. At the same time it is very clearly laid down that such a country may be culturally further advanced than the 'developed' countries. This distinction must be applied to India in particular which has been the cradle of great historic civilisations and highly advanced cultures. Its people are brought up on the very rich traditions of a glorious past. They have an outlook on life that is moulded and coloured by the deep speculations and momentous events of 3000 years of history.

All the same, modern India has a set of socio-economic problems which are typical of the 'under-developed' countries. They have been enumerated by Dr. Jal. F. Bulsara, the well-known India social worker, as "poverty, disease, illiteracy, overpopulation, non-participation, administrative deficiency and imbalance between the rural and the urban economy."

Commenting on Dr. Bulsara's analysis, Dr. Hendry finds support for the former's views in the following facts. Quoting from a speech of Mme. Pandit, he says that "India's greatest weakness, as that of all the countries of Asia, is the crushing poverty of the masses of its people. President Roosevelt spoke of the one-third (of the United States) which was ill-fed, ill-housed and ill-clothed. In India one speaks of the nine-tenths of the nation which is ill-fed, ill-housed and ill-clothed..... In India our people can only hope to live to an average age of twenty-seven years." He continues: "Seven out of ten persons in under-developed parts of the world are chronically ill. The

indices of infant mortality, maternal mortality, morbidity and life expectancy provide ghastly commentary on the lack of elementary personal hygiene and public sanitation... Eight out of every ten in these areas is illiterate...."

He notes how the break up of the Joint Family system is not being replaced by any responsible civic participation, and that administrative inefficiency has weakened the confidence of the people in the government, and finally that the village which was formerly a stable unit of social organization and control is being disrupted, and this results in a vast amount of family disorganization, delinquency, crime and other forms of social maladjustment.*

It is against this background that the content and the scope of social work must be envisaged in an under-developed area.

Common Ground

Despite the fact of such profound differences in the economic, social and cultural backgrounds, it is generally accepted among the leading social workers of both developed and under-developed countries that the basic premises and the technical skills of social work as practised in the West hold good also for the countries of the East. Some of these basic postulates are the recognition of the fundamental dignity of the human person and the desire to enhance the intrinsic worth of the individual as the well-being of society depends on the well-being of the individual. On the

* Social Service and the Standards of Living pg. 119, 120.

other hand, the social environment deeply influences the individual and either helps or impedes his material and spiritual prosperity. It must therefore be improved in such a manner as best to serve the interests of the individual and the community. Individuals as well as groups and communities have a claim on the State to provide them with what they need for a fuller life if they cannot do so themselves. And therefore governments are responsible for the satisfaction of such needs. Finally it is the individual who must take the decision to improve his condition; the social worker is there merely to guide and help him. The principle of self-determination, in other words, 'helping others to help themselves' can never be discarded under any circumstances.

Social Work Range

Obviously the range of Social Work in an under-developed country will cover a much wider field where needs are greater, more elementary, and more widespread. Thus agricultural development, fundamental education, hygiene and sanitation, clothing and cleanliness, unemployment relief, housing in both rural and urban areas, welfare services of the utmost variety — in a word, an all-round attack on the problem of poverty, fear, squalor, ignorance, and disease must be envisaged. In an under-developed country like India, which is essentially a land of villages and where the village has been neglected for centuries, rural social work must occupy the centre of the stage. Hence community organisation or development will assume pride of place in preference to either group work or case work. As a matter of fact, during the recent

discussions of the Economic and Social Council of the U. N., part of the Tenth Session was devoted to the problem of Community development, for as the report says, "Rural Communities comprise up to 80% of the people of the so-called economically less-developed countries." * The rural community is a well-knit unit in its various aspects of social, economic, political and religious life. All these aspects have to be tackled at one and the same time for the raising of the standard of living of the people. The failure of the Credit Co-operative Movement in India has brought this point home to us on more than one occasion. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that no improvement is possible unless the people co-operate and take over the initiative. Any kind of help must be suited to the real needs of the people and rouse in its turn the desire for improvement and the determination to improve. To show these people how to accept and assimilate new habits of behaviour and methods of living is a challenge to the dexterity and the skill of the social worker.

A Gandhian Approach

If in India Community Development found such an important place in the First Five Year Plan, it was because Gandhiji had already to a large extent focussed the attention of the Indian people and especially his followers in the Indian National Congress on the neglect and the stagnation of village life and the necessity of its development for the progress of the

* Economic & Social Council, Tenth Session, E/CN. 5/303, pg. 12.

country. Gandhiji chose to leave the big towns and the cities to dwell in a remote hamlet called Sevagaon near Wardha. From his point of vantage, which became a place of pilgrimage for the big-wigs of the Congress, Gandhiji elaborated his solution of the problem of village poverty and backwardness by trying to make the village self-sufficient for its needs. He wanted the villager to live a simple contented life in the village, far from the haunting immorality of the big city and western industrialisation. Though not all of Gandhiji's ideas may have been accepted by his disciples, Wardha became the centre of experiments in village uplift, and the training ground for social workers imbued with the Gandhian ideology of service of the Harijan, of women, and of the rural poor. The spread of home-spinning and home-weaving of clothing for the villager was one of the cherished aims of the Mahatma for the relief of the villagers from insecurity and to give them employment. Gandhiji demanded of his followers what he himself practised. All his efforts to help the villager sprang from his deep sacrificial love of the poor, his instinctive understanding of the villagers' problems and his attachment to India's hoary traditions of simple, peaceful, and homely living. He foresaw the approaching conflict between the advance of modern Industrialism and the conservative tendencies of the primitive village economy, and he sensed that it would be the latter that would suffer most in the struggle. Hence his continued efforts to render the villager innocuous to its effects by improving the latter's standard of life, making him self-sufficient, and teaching him a philosophy of simple living.

Gram Sevak

Much of Gandhiji's method of approach to the rural problem and his emphasis on rural uplift has been embodied in the Government of India's rural welfare policy. The Community Development Projects, based on the experience of previous successes of the multi-purpose schemes of Etawah in Uttar Pradesh and the Firka Development Scheme of Madras, have forged ahead and with the passing years accumulated a vast fund of experience in tackling rural welfare problems. This in turn has had a powerful effect on the methods of training the *Gram Sevak*, who is the social worker at the village level. It is interesting to note that the *Gram Sevak* is not a specialist in any single branch of social work, like family welfare or delinquency. His training is rather of the more generic type so as to adapt him to cope with the various needs of the village. He is essentially a 'multi-purpose man' and hence his knowledge too must be of the multi-purpose type. He is expected to have some background of agriculture, of sowing, harvesting and manuring, of plant diseases, of soils and fertility, of cattle breeding, poultry farming and bee-keeping, of village hygiene and sanitation, of village arts and crafts, of village festivals, etc. It has been found that the progress of village development hinges on the personal and acquired capacities of the village-level worker. The better trained he is, the more rapid is the advance of the village from poverty and backwardness to sufficiency and progress.

Evolution

This is but one example of how Social Work on both the practical and theoretical level is evolving its own methods by force of circumstances and when confronted with the peculiar problems of the under-developed countries. But much thinking and experi-

mentation is still required to arrive at fairly valid results. While in the West much attention has been devoted to work with individuals, in the under-developed countries of the world, the main preoccupation will be for quite some time to come with the improvement of the entire economic and social lives of the village people which inevitably will involve work with communities, or community organisation and development. Perhaps in this specific sphere of Social Work, the East, and especially South East Asia, might well make its own contribution to the growth and the progress of Social Work techniques. Though the process is a painful one it will be watched by Social Workers the world over with great sympathy and interest and will merit their attentive co-operation.

A. Fonseca.

Delinquent Children

Miss K. H. Cama, the Indian Delegate to the International Crime Conference, held in Geneva, said that annually some thing like 10,000 delinquent children are brought before the courts in India. This figure does not represent the total number of delinquent children for many are never caught. Thousands flock to the cities every year and falling into the hands of anti-social elements turn to a life of crime and vice.

Delinquent children are not born but made. The main cause which drives children into a life of crime is lack of proper family control. The U.N. report on the Prevention of Crime has well pointed out that it is not always poverty which is the main contributory cause, for among primitive but well-knit tribal communities, delinquency among children is virtually unknown though their living standard is very low. The break-down in healthy and sound family life owing to several economic factors such as poor housing, need for both parents to work, etc., has left the children without that control and guidance which is so necessary during the formative years of childhood.

An Agrarian Jubilee in Italy

A few months ago, electoral results in Italy made headline news even in the foreign press. The elections were professional rather than political; for the first time some one million and a half heads of rural families had to elect the 8·000 odd boards that were to control the financing and administration of the local sickness funds provided for by the new Bonomi law, which extended sickness insurance to the countryside. Sharecroppers and rural labourers were already enjoying the social insurance benefits covering all classes of labourers. The new law was passed to benefit tenants and small landowners.

The electoral result marked a crushing defeat for the Communist candidates of the Federterra. The polling was heavy and reached the 94% mark. The Communist list obtained less than 2% of the local boards and none of the provincial boards; their votes did not reach 9% of the total. In contrast the real winner, the "Confederazione Nazionale Coltivatori Diretti" secured 90% of the votes and 97% of the boards. The Confederazione won not only in the regions traditionally attached to the Christian Democrats, but they even took the lead in numberless villages which had been Communist-controlled since the end of World-War II, as in the districts of Sienna, Ravenna, Modena, Livorno, Parma and others. The results were the more significant since in Italy Communism is stronger in the countryside than in the towns and fascinates not only "bracchianti" (labourers) and

"mezadrii" (share-croppers) but also tenants and small peasant-proprietors.

For many the electoral victory was a revelation of the strength of the Confederazione. This organisation, which was started as late as 1944, has now 1,200,000 families of tenants, share-croppers, and peasants on the registers of its 12,300 local centres, all families belonging to the group called "cultivatori diretti" and representing more than two million and a half working units and five million persons, over one half of the Italian people registered in that category.

The Federation was born at a time war was still on and the Fascist regime was fighting its last battles; the country's economy had been shattered; a few militants of the old rural provincial Catholic associations dissolved by Mussolini and a few youths coming out of the Catholic Action groups got together and decided to set up a national union of peasants. A basic point was decided at first: was the union to be secular or openly Christian? In the world of industrial labour, the reborn workers' associations were purely professional; Christians, Socialists and Communists worked together up to the moment it became clear that the Communists were using the trade-unions as political tools for their own purpose. Christians and Socialists had to break off and start their own unions, which up to now have not yet developed their national influence. Matters were different in the world of agriculture; a dominantly Christian background, educational programmes, family policy, etc., combined to indicate that the best or even the only solution could be found solely in an organisation openly advocating the Catholic

social doctrine. Though it was based on the Church's doctrine and requested the assistance of the clergy as moral counsellors, its direction from the first was entrusted to laymen. From the first it refused being affiliated to any political party, though 53 deputies and 27 senators pledged themselves to support its programme and though its president, Mr. Paolo Bonomi, is the most ardent advocate of agricultural reforms in Parliament. The Confederazione and the Democrazia Christiana share the same ideological attachment to democratic methods, but they have no mutual alliance, and the Federazione spokesmen are not slow or timid in freely criticising the Democrat ministers.

What were the factors of the Federation's success? Four of them deserve special mention :

(1) The first was the initial decision and know-how of a handful of leaders. The yearly reports replete with factual information which is read at the general meeting of the local representatives (at Rome this year there were 35,000 who were addressed by the Pope) are a revelation of the breadth of vision and depth of inspiration which animates the movement and its leaders ;

(2) Identity of interests and ideals which kept the people together and which allowed continuity of action and advance in programmes ;

(3) Policy of toning down centralisation and bureaucracy, and insistence on live contacts between national leaders and local sections and on self-governing by the local boards ;

(4) The solidarity and efficiency created by a steady pursuit of the preceding three policies.

As to the field of activity of the Federation, it is as extensive as the range of agricultural life. Its campaigns in public opinion and in Parliament with definite aims and objects revealed a concrete knowledge of agricultural conditions which was in pleasant contrast with the empty propaganda of similar organisations. A fair number of laws and reforms were adumbrated by the peasants themselves and sponsored by their spokesmen. One can instance problems which received the attention of the Federation: price-stability for farm produce, soil improvement, irrigation and communications in the plains, water outflow and afforestation in the mountainous tracts, credit facilities for consolidation of holdings (two lakh peasants were enabled to acquire one million acres), credit facilities also to mechanise farm-work, improve housing and hygiene and cattle-breeding, legislative reforms to ease agricultural contracts and prevent eviction, etc. At present the Federation strives to obtain legal recognition for peasants' organisations and collective bargaining, to reduce the gap between prices paid at the farm and at the grainshop, to foster all types of co-operatives, and increase the protection of farms on the margin of cultivation.

The peasants aim in general at securing for the whole rural world all the advantages already guaranteed to the industrial workers, which general aim well fits in with the small-unit complex of the Italian agriculture. Sickness insurance is in working order, half the funds being provided by the nation, half by the beneficiaries themselves. At the moment a campaign is on to make provision for invalid and old-age pensions. Circumstances which arose from time to time

led the Federation to start specific organisations to meet specific needs. One may quote the following: institute to consolidate holdings, a union to organise 125,000 families of day-labourers into small owners, unions to coordinate social assistance and social insurance, organisation of professional courses for adults (208 courses with 7,505 students in 1953, 307 with 12,660 students in 1954). Quite recently a union of sharecroppers has been started. One must also mention two movements begun a few months ago: one for young men and another for young women, who desire to be trained for their social role in the countryside. Both movements show appreciable progress.

All the above realistic activities of the Confederazione explain the lead it has taken in Italy. Many problems however remain to be solved. According to the latest official enquiry, some 11·8% of the Italian families live in misery, some 25·7% of the rural labour, about 50·9% of the labour in the five districts of Southern Italy. Nor should only wage-earners be taken into consideration; half of the destitute families are independent cultivators, either as tenants or as owners of uneconomic holdings.

The Confederazione is fully alive to the challenge which such problems throw at the initiative and talent of its leaders. Anybody interested in human problems in all countries can only wish continuous success to the "Confederazione Nazionale Coltivatori Diretti", which has done such efficient work for the Italian countryside and which might give suitable inspiration to Indian agricultural cooperatives.

G. Beckers

Documentation

Crime and Punishment

On the 5th December, 1954, at the meeting of the Italian Association of Catholic Jurists, the Holy Father spoke at great length on the problem of *Crime and Punishment*. The Pope's address is of great interest to criminologists, since it deals in a profound way with the causes of crime, its suitable punishment and the rehabilitation of the criminal. But since it is too long to quote verbatim, some of the more important and relevant passages will be given below. It should be noted that the significance of the address bears on the close connection the Pope draws between the violation of the human social order and the divine order, and the reparation that must be offered in each sphere in a very positive way by the criminal. In the classroom manuals on criminology, the violation of the divine order is scarcely referred to, while even the human juridical order is held to be composed of changeable human values. The result is that the criminal, having no solid convictions and awareness of the real heinousness of his crime, is liable to succumb again when tempted once more.

The Path towards Crime

"The problem of crime and punishment," says the Pope, "is a problem concerned with persons, and this under a double aspect. The path towards crime, takes its beginning from the person of the one acting, from his 'Ego', in the sum of the actions which proceed from the Ego as from a conscious and voluntary determination; that is acts which the Ego was able to perform or not to perform, those which it performs because it has freely determined to do so. This central function of the Ego with regard to itself is an essential element when there is question of true crime and true punishment.

The criminal act however is also always an opposition of one person against another, both when the immediate object of the crime is a thing, as in theft, and when it is a person, as in murder; further the Ego of the person who becomes

a criminal is directed against higher authority, and therefore in the end always against the authority of God.

It is also to be observed that the person and the function of the person who is the criminal form a strict unity, which in its turn presents different aspects. Simultaneously it concerns the psychological, juridical, ethical and religious fields. These aspects can also be considered separately; but in true crime and punishment they are so closely related among themselves that only by taking them all together is it possible to form a correct concept about the criminal and the question of crime and punishment.

The path towards crime therefore is this: the spirit of a man is found in the following situation; it is faced with the performance or omission of an action and this performance or omission is presented to it as simply obligatory, as an absolute 'you must', an unconditional demand to be fulfilled by a personal decision. The man refuses to obey this demand: he rejects the good, accepts the evil. When the internal resolution is not terminated within itself, it is followed by an external action. Thus the criminal action is accomplished both internally and externally.

Nature and Aspects of the criminal act

As far as the subjective side of the crime is concerned, in order to judge rightly it is necessary to take into account not only the external act, but also the influences, both internal and external, which have co-operated in the decision of the criminal, such as innate or acquired dispositions, impulses or obstructions, impressions from education, stimulations from persons or things in the midst of which the person lives, circumstantial factors, and in a particular way the habitual and actual intensity of the will-act, the so-called 'criminal urge', which has contributed to the accomplishment of the criminal act.

Considered in the object affected by it, the criminal action is an arrogant contempt for authority, which demands the orderly maintenance of what is right and good, and which is the source, the guardian, the defender and the vindicator of order itself. And since all human authority cannot be de-

rived ultimately except from God, every criminal act is an opposition to God Himself, to His supreme law and sovereign majesty. This religious aspect is inherently and essentially connected with the criminal act.

The object affected by the act is also the legally established community, if and in as far as it places in danger and violates the order established by the laws. Nevertheless not every true criminal act has the character of a crime against the public law. Public authority must be concerned only with those criminal actions which injure the orderly society as established by law. Hence the rule concerning a juridical crime: no crime where there is no law. But such a violation if it is otherwise a true criminal act in itself, is also always a violation of the ethical and religious norm. It follows therefore that those human laws which are in contradiction to divine laws cannot form the basis for a true criminal act against the public law.

Connected with the concept of the criminal act is the concept that the author of the act becomes deserving of punishment. The problem of punishment has its beginning, in an individual case, at the moment in which a man becomes a criminal. The punishment is the reaction, required by law and justice, to the crime: they are like a blow and a counter-blow. The order violated by the criminal act demands the restoration and re-establishment of the equilibrium which has been disturbed. It is the proper task of the law and justice to guard and preserve the harmony between duty, on the one hand, and the law, on the other, and to re-establish this harmony, if it has been injured. The punishment in itself touches not the criminal act, but the author of it, his person, his Ego, which with conscious determination has performed the criminal act. Likewise the punishing does not proceed as it were from an abstract juridical ordination, but from the concrete person invested with legitimate authority. As the criminal act, so also the punishment opposes person to person.

Meaning and purpose of Punishment

Punishment properly so-called cannot therefore have any other meaning and purpose than that just mentioned, to bring:

back again into the order of duty the violator of the law, who had withdrawn from it. This order of duty is necessarily an expression of the order of being, of the order of the true and the good, which alone has the right of existence, in opposition to error and evil, which represent that which should not exist. Punishment accomplishes its purpose in its own way, in as far as it compels the criminal, because of the act performed, to suffer, that is, it deprives him of a good and imposes upon him an evil. But in order that this suffering may be a punishment, the causal connection with the crime is essential.

The State of Guilt and Punishment

We add that the criminal has brought about, by his act, a state which does not automatically cease when the act itself is completed. He remains the man who has consciously and deliberately violated a law which binds him, and simultaneously he is involved in the penalty. This personal condition endures, both in his relation to the authority on which he depends and in his relation to the supreme divine authority. There is thus brought about an enduring state of guilt and punishment.....

As we have just indicated, with the act of crime there is immediately linked, not the punishment itself, but the guiltiness and punishability of the action. None the less, there is not excluded a penalty, which by virtue of a law, is incurred automatically at the moment of criminal action. In Canon Law are recognized penalties liable to be incurred by the very fact of committing a sin. In civil law, such a penalty is rare, nay, in some legal systems, unknown.

Presuppositions of every penal sentence

Consequently it is customary for the penalty to be imposed by a competent authority. That supposes a penal law actually in force, a legal person invested with authority to punish, and in him certain knowledge of the act to be punished, as much from the objective standpoint, i.e. concerning the actual commission of the crime contemplated by the law,

as from the subjective standpoint, viz. from a consideration of the culpability of the guilty one, its gravity and extension.

This knowledge, necessary for pronouncing a penal sentence, is, before the court of God the supreme Judge, perfectly clear and infallible; but this knowledge in absolute fullness and sovereign certainty at every instant of life, and over every human act, is proper to God alone. Because of this, there belongs to God alone the final judgement on the value of a man, and the decision on his ultimate fate. Yet an infallible judgement of God exists also during life on earth, and in some cases He carries it into effect during the present life of the man.

Moral Certainty in Human Judgements

The human judge, on the other hand, since he does not possess the omnipresence and omniscience of God, has the duty of forming for himself, before issuing a judicial sentence, a moral certainty — one that excludes every reasonable and serious doubt about the external fact and internal culpability. But he does not have immediate insight into the interior dispositions of the accused at the very moment of the crime; rather in most cases the judge is not in a position to reconstruct them with absolute clarity from the arguments offered in proof, nor, often enough even from the confession of the delinquent. But this difficulty should not be exaggerated as though it were ordinarily impossible for a human judge to attain sufficient certainty, and therefore a solid foundation for a sentence. According to the cases, the judge will not fail to consult renowned specialists on the capacity and responsibility of the presumed criminal, and to take into consideration the findings of the modern sciences of psychology, psychiatry and characterology. If, despite all these precautions, there still remains a grave and serious doubt no conscientious judge will proceed to pronounce a sentence of condemnation, all the more so when there is question of an irrevocable punishment, such as the death penalty....

Reactions of the Condemned to Punishment

The meaning and purpose of the punishment, and the intention of the punishing authority, which is usually in agreement with that purpose, indicate the attitude the culprit should have; it is that of acknowledgement of the evil done, which provoked the penalty; of aversion from, and repudiation of, the evil deed itself, of repentance, expiation and purification, and purpose of future amendment. That is the path the condemned man should follow. The problem, however, is whether he will really take it. Turning our attention to such a question, it may be helpful to consider the sufferings caused by the punishment, according to its various aspects. psychological, juridical, moral and religious, though normally these various aspects are all closely united in the concrete.

Psychological Aspect

Psychologically, nature spontaneously reacts against the physical evil of the penalty, her reaction being all the stronger in proportion to the suffering imposed on human nature as such, or on the individual temperament. Along with this there is a fixing, likewise spontaneous, of the culprit's attention on the criminal action which caused his punishment, and whose connection is now vividly before his mind, or at least is now uppermost in his conscience.

Following such more or less involuntary attitudes, there appears the conscious and willed reaction of the Ego, the centre and source of all personal actions. This higher reaction can be a voluntary, positive acceptance; it may be mere passive resignation; or at times, it may be a deep bitterness, a total interior collapse; then too, it may be a proud resistance, which at times becomes a hardening in evil; finally it may be a complete revolt, savage but impotent. Such psychological reactions take differing forms, depending on whether there is question of a long punishment, or of a short punishment, short in time, but surpassing in height and depth all time-measure — the pain of death, for example.

Juridical Sphere

Juridically, execution of the punishment implies the valid, effective action of the higher and stronger power of the juridical community on the law-breaker, who obstinately opposed to the law, has culpably violated the established juridical order, and now is forced to submit to the prescriptions of the order — for the greater good of the community and of the criminal himself. Thus the idea and necessity of penal law is clear.

On the other hand, justice demands that in carrying out the provisions of penal law, any increase of those punishments provided for the case, as also any arbitrary harshness, annoyance or provocation, be avoided. Higher authority must see to the carrying out of the punishment, and give it a form which will correspond to its purpose, . . . in adapting it to the person of the punished. Indeed the gravity and dignity of the power to punish, and its exercise, naturally indicate that the public authority view as its main duty contact with the person of the guilty one. Judgement on him must be made, therefore, according to special circumstances, if the functioning of that office is to be fully taken care of through proper channels.

Moral Point of View

To suffer in this life means practically a turning of the soul within itself; it is a path which drives one from the superficial to deep within oneself. Considered in that light, suffering has great moral value. Presupposing a right intention, its free acceptance is a priceless act. The same is true of suffering caused by punishment which can bring progress to one's interior life. By its nature, it is a reparation and a restoration, — through and in the guilty person, and willed by him, of the culpably violated social order. The essence of the return to good consists more exactly in breaking away from the fault than in the free acceptance of suffering. Suffering however can lead to this break, and turning away from one's wrongdoing can, in its turn, be of great moral value, and facilitate and elevate its moral effectiveness.

Religious Element

Every moral transgression of man, even if materially committed only in the sphere of legitimate human laws and then punished by men according to positive human law, is always a sin before God and calls down upon itself from God a punitive judgement. The religious element in the infliction of punishment finds its expression and realization in the person of the guilty man, in so far as he humbles himself under the hand of God Who is punishing him through the instrumentality of men; thus he is accepting his sufferings from God, offering them to God as a partial payment of the debt which he has contracted before God. Accepted in this way, punishment becomes for the guilty person a source of interior purification on this earth, of complete conversion, of resolution for the future, a bulwark against possible relapse. Suffering thus accepted with faith, repentance and love is sanctified by the pains of Christ and supported by his grace.

A. F.

(To be continued)

Social Activity

Social Conference, Hyderabad

The Andhra Regional Unit of the All India Catholic Social Organisation held its first meeting on 14th and 15th of June at Hyderabad, under the Chairmanship of Rev. Fr. Jerome D'Souza, S. J., Director of the Indian Institute of Social Order, Poona.

Representatives from the dioceses of Bezwada, Warangal, Nellore, Guntur, Vizagapatam and Hyderabad attended the Conference. The Chairman after a few introductory words addressed the Delegates and gave them a brief sketch of the work done by the other units of the Organisation in various parts of the country.

The Conference devoted a considerable amount of time to the close and thorough study of some of the more im-

portant resolutions of the Ernakulam Conference and discussed ways and means of realising them in practice. The question that was discussed at length and with much enthusiasm was the one concerning the very important matter of Catholic literature in Telugu. A resolution was adopted to intensify this work in various ways, especially by trying to get more people to write and translate good books into Telugu.

Before concluding the session the Delegates adopted a number of very practical and matter-of-fact resolutions the chief among them being the one about setting up as many Social Centres as possible both in rural and urban areas.

Caritas

CARITAS or Catholic Charities, is the title of a fascinating little booklet published by the Archdiocese of Madras-Mylapore. In its 90 neatly printed pages one can read with great interest the moving story of the many and varied social works conducted throughout the Archdiocese. The brochure begins by giving in clear and concise language a brief summary of the theology of all social work. After that it proceeds to give an account of each of different social works carried out mentioning in detail the constitution of each organisation, the methods employed, the kind of work undertaken, the number of workers engaged in the work, etc. A special feature of the booklet is the information concerning the various institutions, clerical and lay, which carry on social work such as schools, hospitals, orphanages and other charitable concerns. In brief the little work is a treasure-house of information which social workers everywhere will find very useful.

When one goes through the pages of this publication one feels proud and happy that we Catholics today are as faithful to Christ's command, which requires us to show that we are His disciples by our love to our fellowmen, as were our brethren during the early days of the Church.

Social Exhibition

The Exhibition was opened in the Jehangir Art Gallery Hall on 7th July. After a welcome by Dr. J. S. Samson, pre-

sident of the Committee, Fr. Jerome D'Souza, S.J., Director of the Indian Institute of Social Order, introduced Mr. J. D. Ryan, who had agreed to substitute for Dr. John Mathai, prevented by illness from opening the Exhibition. Mr. Ryan in declaring the Exhibition open spoke of the Social problems that confront us today and of the teaching of the Church. He wisely stressed that the Church offers no rigid solution in the temporal order but is satisfied with giving vital principles which Christians have the duty and responsibility of applying to varying circumstances and situations.

Posters, charts, maps, models were resplendent with the colour and neatness which the De Nobili College artists had showered on them during their leisure time of three months. Four elegant cubicles divided the subject-matter: origin of the social problem, the Communist solution, the Catholic principles of solution, the peculiarities of India's social problem. It was indeed an exhibition with a subject-matter, factual information, doctrinal contents and adumbrated advice. Some 8000 people saw the exhibition during the four days it was thrown open to the public.

The visitors were conducted round the exhibits in groups by the students of the Diocesan Seminary who explained to them in clear and precise terms the contents of each poster and chart and answered lucidly every question proposed to them by intellectually minded spectators. The Communist were there too and they showed the worth of the Exhibition by their thorough dislike of the whole show. They even threatened to destroy it.

F. C. R.

Social Survey

Durgapur Barrage

On August 9, 1955, the Vice-President of India opened, in the presence of a large and enthusiastic gathering, the Durgapur Barrage. Durgapur is a small town some thirty miles to the East of the mining and industrial city of Assansol and lies close to the railway line and the Grand Trunk Road. The barrage is a part of the D.V.C. project and stands at the head of an extensive canal system which will irrigate 1,026,000 kharif acres and 300,000 rabi acres. The canal which lies on the left bank, besides providing water for irrigation, will serve as a navigational canal.

The barrage which is 2272 feet in length and cost about Rs. 23 crores is almost complete. Out of the 1550 miles of canal system about 40 per cent has been completed already and the rest will be ready by the end of 1958. The navigational canal too may take a year or two more. The districts of Bankura Burdwan, Hooghly and Howrah will profit immensely from the irrigation facilities which will be made available. It is estimated that something like 6,000,000 extra maunds of rice will be produced in these regions. It may be the farmers will switch on to other crops. The government has plans to grow more sugar-cane, a commodity very badly needed in the economy of West Bengal and jute.

The navigational canal which will be 85 miles in length, 172 feet broad at the head and 60 at the tail end, and 8 to 12 feet deep throughout the year, will enable craft of six feet draft to use it. There will be a number of locks. These have been so planned as to accommodate four barrages, each of 200 tons, two going up-stream and two down-stream. It is estimated that 2,000,000 tons of cargo will be moved through this canal each year. This will be a great relief to the over-worked Eastern Railway system.

With the ample power available from the DVC generators, the wealth of raw material in the whole region, Durgapur and the surrounding country is going to become

the most industrialised tract in India. In fact the West Bengal government has already dubbed it the Ruhr of India. The State Government has decided to set up a coke-oven plant. It is likely that the third Government owned Steel Mill be set up in the area also. Already we have the Chitaranjan Loco Works, the Hindustan Cables, and a number of small and big industries. Many more have been planned for the near future both by the public and private sector. All this industrialisation is expected to solve among others the unemployment problem which is the main worry of the West Bengal Government.

The DVC administration will soon start operating an extensive experimental and model farm both for research and education of the farmers.

Mortality Rate

Investigations undertaken by the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta, supply us some interesting information on the relative mortality rate of males and females in large cities. The inquiry has found that mortality rate among city females is much larger than among city males. Of the big cities of India, Calcutta has the highest female mortality rate. Tuberculosis and small-pox are the two diseases which affect the city female more than the city male.

Tuberculosis is spreading rapidly both in cities and the rural area. Many villagers who migrate into industrial areas fall easy victims to this dreadful disease. Acute poverty and the consequent mal-nutrition, wretched housing conditions and lack of proper medical attention are some of the main contributory causes of this sad state of affairs. It is found that relatively there is more T.B. among the middle classes than the very poor. This may be due to undernourishment, for to keep up the external standards of their class, these people forgo the essentials.

Poverty is also the cause of high maternal mortality. Anaemia alone is responsible for 30.3 per cent of the deaths in hospitals. Another interesting bit of information which the study has discovered is that fertility among Hindu fe-

males is inversely proportional to their wealth. Among the Muslims it is the opposite.

Industrial Disputes

During 1954 there were 840 labour disputes which resulted in the loss of 2,372,630 man-days. There were more disputes in 1954 than in 1953 but the man-days lost were fewer, the figures being 772 and 3,382,807 respectively.

The Labour Appellate Tribunal having its headquarters in Calcutta and branches in Lucknow, and Bombay disposed of 790 appeals and 1948 applications during the period January to November 1954. The number of appeals and applications pending before the Tribunal at the end of November 1954 were 1550 and 1540 respectively. To expedite the disposal of pending appeals the Government has decided to set up two more branches. The one in Madras started functioning recently. The Government has also amended the Industrial Disputes (Appellate Tribunal) Act suitably to enable the Tribunal to remit some of the applications to other Industrial courts.

The Kanpur strike, the longest known, came to an end or rather died of exhaustion. Those who had unnecessarily indulged in this anti-social stunt for political reasons gained nothing in the end though to save their face they announced the winning of certain concessions.

State Loans

The State Loans offered by the various State Governments were open for subscription on August 16th. In spite of the widespread hartal in most cities of India following the cold-blooded massacre of peaceful and unarmed Satyagrahis entering Goa, most loans were over-subscribed on that very day. In Bombay where hooligans had taken over for several hours and paralysed city life, the Reserve Bank received subscriptions on the phone.

Floods

Though rainfall has been generally on the deficient side in most parts of the country our Northern States have once

more been in the grip of devastating floods. In Uttar Pradesh, North Bihar and Assam thousands of acres of rich agricultural land have been submerged and crops destroyed, whole villages have been wiped out, rendering hundreds of thousands homeless. Though, many months before the coming of the monsoon rains, the various governments concerned, with the willing cooperation of vast numbers of voluntary labourers, had put up bunds to stop the progress of turbulent rivers, the rushing waters from the Himalayan gorges have once again spread death and destruction in their wake. The damage done will amount to crores of rupees. It is a pity that when we are trying to husband our resources to build up the economy of our poor country, nature shows itself so cruel to us.

Social Security for Labourers

The Employees' Provident Funds Scheme is making satisfactory progress. During the year 1954, 1,547,000 workers employed in 1900 were extended provident fund benefits under the Scheme. Of the employees covered 510,000 were employed in non-exempted factories and the remaining 1,037,000 in exempted factories. The total amount of provident contributions invested in the Central Government Securities upto the end of November 1954 amounted to Rs. 32 crores. Interest at 3 per cent was credited to members' provident fund accumulations.

During the same year the Employees' State Insurance Scheme was implemented in Nagpur, Greater Bombay, Coimbatore, Indore, Gwalior, Ujjain, and Ratlam. Recently it has been introduced in Calcutta. The total number of workers covered by the Scheme upto January 1955 was 686,000. This figure does not include the workers of the Calcutta area.

A working commission has been set up by the Central Government to study the possibility of setting up a State Insurance Scheme for the benefit of the unemployed. The Commission will also suggest the methods of running such a scheme.

Bank Employees

At long last the report of the Gajendragadkar Commission on the Bank Award is out and the Government of India has

announced its decision to accept in full its recommendations. The Commission has recommended the restoration of the Labour Appellate Tribunal's award, with certain modifications to all "A" banks (Indian and foreign), all class "B" banks, except the Bank of Bikaner and the United Bank of India, and certain class "C" banks.

Mr. V. V. Giri who had resigned from the Central Cabinet as a protest against the modification of the Tribunals Award by the Government finds the Commissions recommendations "as illuminating as they are interesting and useful". The Bankers are resigned to their lot and are devising ways and means to raise the necessary funds to meet the new demands. The Employees are on the whole pleased though there are some mutterings and disappointments among some categories. It is generally hoped that all parties will be satisfied and the eight-year-old dispute will be finally laid to rest.

B. C. G. Vaccination

Tuberculosis is widespread in India and it is spreading like wild fire. After years of experimentation eminent medical men have come to the conclusion that the B.C.G. vaccination gives immunity from three to six years. They are also agreed that it is harmless. No one is bold enough to maintain that they know everything about its effects but all are agreed that from what we know it is a safe and useful means of checking the dread disease. Unfortunately Mr. C. Rajagopalachari is going about with all the ardour of a crusader of old lecturing, debating and writing against the B.C.G. vaccination. Though, as he says, his opposition is against *mass* vaccination, the simple people have come to the conclusion that the vaccination itself is not only useless but is fraught with danger to life and limb. It is admitted by Government that the campaign has suffered considerably. There may be some risk involved in taking the vaccination but one may ask as to which course is wiser, to face a possible risk in the remote future or to fall a prey to this wasting disease and migrate to the land of their forefathers. Emotion should have no part in the scientific approach to a problem.

Students and bullets

Student-police clashes are becoming quite frequent in the country. Every now and then we hear of students becoming violent and the police firing on them nipping a young life in the bud. Recently in Patna and several large towns of Bihar students are reported to have clashed with the custodians of the law with unfortunate results. What is distressing in these cases is that popular sentiment is more or less entirely on the side of the students and violently against the police who often are called upon to face not a batch of peaceful students but a gang of veritable hooligans. No one has a kindly word to the policemen who lies in the hospital with his head smashed by a brick-bat or eyes burnt out by acid bombs. The policeman is on the scene not because he wants it but duty demands that he be there to protect the innocent citizen and his property. Could we say the same of the violent mobs who have taken the law into their own hands there would be some justification for condemning the action of the policemen. The law of self defence is not meant only for the mobster but also for the custodian of law and order. It is true that officers in charge do get panicky sometimes and instead of trying out other means less dangerous, resort to firing. However blameworthy the action of the police in given cases there is no gainsaying that discipline among students is conspicuous by its absence. Certain political parties must share a great deal of responsibility for this.

F. C. R.

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P O O N A 1

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3. To serve as a centre of information about social works.

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